(vi) Carryout door-step delivery of PDS commodities to fair price shops.

(vii) Ensuring timely availability of and issuance of foodgrains by fair price shops.

(viii) Creating awareness among public about PDS operations, training Vigilance Committees of intricacies of PDS operations.

(ix) Making fair price shops financially viable entities-allowing them to sell non PDS items etc.

Procurement of Wheat

1589. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is wheat production and procurement in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07;

(b) the root causes for decline in wheat procurement in the country; and

(c) the details of the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The production of wheat in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 and procurement in the corresponding Rabi Marketing Seasons (RMS) in the country is as follows:

(in lakh tonnes)

Crop Year	Production	Corresponding RMS	Procurement
2004-05	686	2005-06	147.9
2005-06	694	2006-07	92.3
2006-07	758	2007-08	111.3

(b) The main reasons for low procurement in RMS 2006-07 were less than targeted production, less market arrivals, negative market sentiments, high open market prices and high private participation. In RMS 2007-08 procurement of wheat was low on account of low market arrivals, high private participation and the possibility that a large number of farmers held back stocks in expectation of higher prices in later part of the year.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to improve procurement of wheat in RMS 2008-09 are as follows:—

(i) The MSP for wheat has been fixed at Rs. 1000 per quintal for RMS 2008-09, are increase of Rs. 250 per quintal over the MSP fixed for RMS 2007-08, in order to encourage farmers to increase their production of wheat.

(ii) Import of 18 lakh tonnes of wheat was done in 2007-08 which improved the stock position of wheat in the Central Pool and the wheat stocks (as on 1.4.2008) is estimated to be more than the buffer norms of 40 lakh tonnes at the start of RMS 2008-09.

(iii) Wheat export on private account have been banned till further orders. Wheat export from Central Pool is also banned.

(iv) A notification titled "Wheat (Stock Declaration by Companies or Firms or Individuals) Order 2008" has been issued under the Essential Commoditieis Act 1955 on 11.2.2008.

(b) and (c) There is a SGC office in Rajasthan located at Jaipur. However, on the recommendations of Expenditure Reform Commission (ERC), all the Save Grain Campaign offices including Jaipur are being closed.

(d) The number of farmers trained under the SGC in Rajasthan during the last three years, year-wise, are as under:—

Sl. No.	Item of Work	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (upto December, 2007)
1.	Number of farmers trained in Stipendiary Training Courses	1850	1400	1050
2.	Number of farmers trained in non-Stipendiary Training Courses	2031	1526	1300
	TOTAL	3881	2926	2350

Delayed production of sugar

†1591. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that production of sugar in several States has been delayed by sugar mills despite the commencement of crushing season in the country;

(b) if so, the names of these States and whether this is also a reason for decrease in sugar production in the country during sugar crushing year 2007-08;

(c) if not, the reaction of Government therefor and whether sugarcane growers have also suffered loss due to delay in starting crushing of sugarcane; and

(d) if so, the estimate of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) The late crushing of sugarcane by sugar factories is reported to have taken place in the States of Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand during the current sugar season 2007-08. The sugar production in the country during the current sugar season may decline by about 15 lac tonnes over the last sugar season. One of the factors for decline in sugar production can be late starting of crushing operations by sugar factories.

Foodgrains stock for PDS

1592. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB PEEVEE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether country would experience a tight position in foodgrains stock in the Central Pool for the public distribution system by April, 2009; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

† *Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.*